

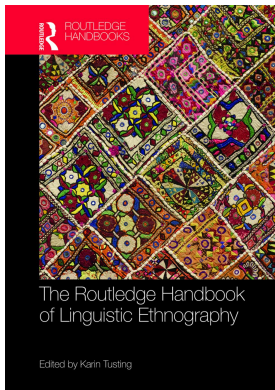
This article was downloaded by: 10.2.97.136

On: 08 Jun 2023

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



The Routledge Handbook of Linguistic Ethnography

Karin Tusting

Sign languages

Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315675824-25>

Lynn Hou, Annelies Kusters

Published online on: 20 Sep 2019

How to cite :- Lynn Hou, Annelies Kusters. 20 Sep 2019, *Sign languages from: The Routledge Handbook of Linguistic Ethnography* Routledge

Accessed on: 08 Jun 2023

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315675824-25>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR DOCUMENT

Full terms and conditions of use: <https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/legal-notices/terms>

This Document PDF may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproductions, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The publisher shall not be liable for an loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Sign languages

Lynn Hou and Annelies Kusters

Introduction: linguistic ethnography and sign languages

This chapter focusses on the interpretive value of contemporary linguistic ethnography (LE) for studying sign languages, as used in visual and tactile interactions with deaf and deaf-blind people and their interlocutors.

First, we discuss what constitutes LE in the context of sign languages. Second, we review some recent work that has taken an ethnographic approach to language, including signed communication among deaf, deaf-blind and hearing people in familial, educational and community settings in urban and rural contexts. (Note: our usage of “deaf” and “deaf-blind” people is intended to refer to all deaf and deaf-blind people without imposing any essentialist assumptions or situating them into a predominantly Western context. We adopt the appropriate terminology when discussing a particular work.) We show how linguistic ethnographic studies have expanded and enriched our understandings of how new sign languages emerge, how people acquire sign languages, how people negotiate communication with varying degrees of access to the environment and how their experiences of these situations are represented in metalinguistic discourse (including in explicitly articulated language ideologies). These analyses highlight the importance of semiotic, interactional and social frameworks for expanding many core concepts that are foundational in sign language linguistics. In this chapter, we explore LE as an approach for enhancing these frameworks and, as such, contribute to our understanding of what the approach can do for the study of sign languages.

LE is a theoretical and methodological approach that views language as a culturally and socially constituted and situated practice (Creese, 2008). Since LE is not a field, discipline or framework, but rather an umbrella term that refers to the combination of ethnographic, sociolinguistic and applied linguistics methods drawn from many fields and disciplines, researchers bring different theoretical assumptions and foci to their work. The researchers constitute an interdisciplinary group: they come from diverse backgrounds, spanning social and linguistic anthropology, education, applied and theoretical linguistics, and sociolinguistics. Linguistic fieldwork in sign languages is often carried out with the goal of language documentation and description (Nyst, 2015) but researchers have also focussed on language emergence, language learning and socialisation, and language choices and language ideologies. Some researchers

have actively fostered or supported the processes of sign language maintenance or emergence in the process of their research (Edwards, 2014; Snoddon, 2016). In what follows, we cite people engaged in what we consider to be LE, as well as works and debates that linguistic ethnographers draw on and contribute to. We highlight the interpretive powers of LE and the utility of ethnographic methods for challenging essentialist views of the social lives and language practices of deaf people.

Main research methods

In this chapter, we mainly engage with recent works that constitute examples of LE. Such works result from long-term fieldwork in which researchers know or learn the sign language(s) they are investigating, do participant observation and regularly interact with people in their language(s). Video recording interactions is essential to many of these works. Some researchers also conduct linguistic elicitation tasks. Researchers doing LE have worked with research assistants, typically deaf, deaf-blind, protactile and hearing signers. Some research teams (Cooper & Nguyễn, 2015; Kusters et al., 2016; Cooper & Tran Thuy Tien, 2017) have documented in detail how they communicated and worked together when doing LE as multilingual teams of deaf and hearing people originating from the global North and South.

To annotate and analyse sign language data, many researchers have worked with ELAN, a multi-media annotation tool for creating time-aligned transcripts (Crasborn et al., 2006). Some researchers have also used qualitative data analysis software to analyse written and/or spoken translations of interviews in sign languages. They may also annotate and transcribe them directly using contextual glosses in English or in another written language, though there are no standard transcription and writing systems for sign languages.

Terms and classifications: sociolinguistic contexts of signing

Many scholars have organised different forms of signing on a developmental cline in this way: homesign – communal/rural/family homesign – village/rural/shared sign language – national/urban sign language (Meir et al., 2010; Zeshan & de Vos, 2012). There is usually the construction of an ideological break between sign and/or gesture as ‘system’, and ‘sign language’. While we do not adhere to this ideological break nor to the ideology of a developmental cline, we find it useful to look at how different forms of signing are produced in different language ecologies. It is through LE that researchers have been able to reach a deeper understanding of these forms of signing and their sociolinguistic contexts, often through emic perspectives of deaf signers themselves. LE has also challenged the very classifications discussed below, although we do refer to specific and/or collections of instances when referring to a particular work, adopting that scholar’s choice of terminology.

National, urban sign languages mostly, but not always, emerged in the contexts of schools for deaf children. Some of them are believed to have evolved from homesign variants, sign languages developed in large deaf families, ‘village’ sign languages such as Martha’s Vineyard SL (Poole Nash, 2015) and/or elements from other national sign languages (Kegl et al., 1999). Sometimes, a national sign language that has emerged in one country has been imported into another country (e.g. by teachers or missionaries) and has since then evolved. National, urban sign languages are used in large deaf communities, often concentrated in cities and/or spread over large geographical areas. In many cases, these sign languages have been institutionalised,

e.g. they are used in schools to teach deaf children through direct instruction or through interpreters. Historically, in many countries, a certain degree of sign language spreading and standardisation has occurred through contacts between pupils/teachers from different schools, teacher training of teachers for deaf children and of sign language teachers, and the use of sign language in the media. Yet, in most countries with a national sign language, there may be regional variants of the language. A recent documented case is Black American SL (ASL), a constellation of ASL varieties that emerged in segregated residential schools for African-American deaf children in the southern U.S. (McCaskill et al., 2011).

Village, rural, or shared sign languages (different terms for roughly the same phenomenon) are used in small, often rural communities which exhibit a relatively high rate of hereditary deafness, often higher than the rate found in general populations. The sustained presence of hereditary deafness and community-wide social interaction between deaf and hearing people have led to the emergence, spread and maintenance of sign languages (Nyst, 2012; Zeshan & de Vos, 2012). Nyst (2012) coined the term “shared sign languages”, which is based on Kisch’s (2008) term “shared signing communities” to highlight that the practice of signing is widely shared between deaf and hearing residents throughout such communities. Zeshan and de Vos (2012) used the term “rural sign languages” based on their observation that the majority of these sign languages emerged in rural communities, whereas Nonaka (2009) used “indigenous/village” sign languages.

Homesign (also *home sign*) emerges in the context of communication of deaf people who are not exposed to a sign language with their families (Kegl et al., 1999). The term ‘homesign’ was initially coined by Susan Goldin-Meadow for referring to the gesture systems invented by deaf children who were not exposed to a conventional sign language. Nyst et al. (2012, p. 268) emphasised that the term ‘homesign’ has been used to describe two distinct phenomena. One pertains to “deaf children growing up in hearing environments with no exposure to a conventional sign language, following oralist educational advice”. The other pertains to the signing practices of deaf persons in rural areas where gesturing/signing is considered to be the natural way for communicating with deaf people and where an extensive conventional body of gestures is in use. Concentrating on West Africa, Nyst et al. (2012) coined the term ‘rural homesign’ for the latter phenomenon. Zeshan (2011) proposed the term ‘communal homesign’ for similar contexts, although she did not identify which languages exemplify this term.

Different researchers have categorised similar language practices either as ‘gesture’, ‘homesign’ or ‘sign language’. Such practices of naming either reinforce or challenge distinct scholarly ideologies about what constitutes language and not language. For example, Nyst et al. (2012, p. 269) suggested that rural homesign constitutes (sign) *language* rather than a (homesign) *system*, since “rural home sign varieties meet the criteria of a) a community of users, and b) transmission across generations”, implying that non-rural homesign may not constitute sign language. Similarly, Branson et al. (1999) used ‘sign language’ and ‘signing’ rather than ‘gesturing’ when writing about ‘isolated’ deaf people’s (rural/communal home) signing with hearing people in rural areas in Bali, arguing that sign language is a natural part of the linguistic mosaic in the area. Furthermore, some smaller village sign languages are perhaps more adequately described as ‘constellations of family sign languages’ (Hou, 2016 – see below), while other village sign languages are multigenerational, broadly used throughout the community. In response to Nyst et al. (2012), Zeshan and de Vos (2012) suggested that the existing taxonomy of sign languages can be fleshed out by further conceptualising the in-between areas between homesign and fully fledged sign languages. Yet they do not question the linear construction of the taxonomy, leaving the ideology of a developmental cline of manual communication implicit.

The developmental basis of such classifications of sign languages has been questioned by several scholars. Nyst (2012, p. 566) criticised the assumptions of situating sign language types on developmental clines:

- 1 There is an ultimate stage of sign language development, a sort of ‘super sign language’.
(...)
- 2 All sign languages in the world will eventually move towards the ultimate stage of development if given the opportunity.
- 3 There is a hierarchy amongst sign language types as to which sign language has advanced more on the developmental cline.

Hou (2016, p. 17) resisted situating San Juan Quiahije Chatino Sign Language (Mexico), which she called “a constellation of family sign languages”, in the extant taxonomy of classifications: “The typological diversity of sign languages suggests that mapping simple correspondences between a sign language, their language ecology, and structure may overlook and underestimate the actual and potential diversity of sign languages and signing communities.” Similarly, in her research on signing practices in rural Nepal, Green (2014a) resisted to classify ‘natural sign’, a term used to refer to the type of signing/gesturing that many non-signing hearing people can use and understand.

In the cases studied by Kusters (2017a), Hou (2016) and Green (2014a), there is no strongly and broadly conventionalised body of signs as is the case for some village sign languages, yet people engage in signed communication and experience more or less limitations to these forms of communication. We surmise that these cases may represent typical deaf-hearing gestural/signed communication in much of the Global South. By its focus on naturally occurring deaf-deaf and deaf-hearing communication in different sociolinguistic contexts, LE has thus expanded and enriched our understanding of the actual *diversity* of these communicative practices and embedded their investigation firmly within their sociolinguistic and sociocultural contexts. In addition, LE has identified *overlaps* between different ways of communicating manually (e.g. homesign, village sign, gestures), which led some authors to question or challenge the utility and credibility of rigid scholarly categories of “types” and continuum-based models of signed communication.

Research areas

Language learning and socialisation

Many researchers have investigated first-language acquisition in deaf children with an emphasis on the structural properties of sign languages. Researchers who have taken an LE approach to study deaf children have explored language socialisation processes that support and/or inhibit these processes. This is critical, since, worldwide, the majority of deaf children are born to hearing parents who have no history of intergenerational deafness and most likely no knowledge of a conventional sign language. The deaf children cannot fully access the spoken languages of their families and the surrounding speech communities and thus cannot fully participate in the spoken language socialisation environment the same way hearing children do (Erting & Kuntze, 2008). Family is usually the first and major site of language socialisation where children absorb their family’s language(s) through social interaction and are socialised to become competent members of their family and the surrounding communities (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1994).

School, on the other hand, is considered a secondary site of language socialisation for children, where they continue using their family's language or where they learn another language to interact with other children and their teachers and become competent members of new communities (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1994). For many deaf children, by contrast, school can be the crucial site of language socialisation, where they are exposed to a conventional sign language, usually the national, urban variety, sometimes for the first time, through other deaf children, adults, teachers and other community members. School is also where many deaf children learn to become competent signers and members of a local deaf community as well as learning the norms, customs and rules of social life (LeMaster, 2003; Senghas, 2003; Polich, 2005). Peer-to-peer transmission of a conventional sign language is more common than parent-to-child (Erting & Kuntze, 2008). In other cases, deaf children do not attend a school for the deaf and learn the sign language by interacting with other deaf people at deaf clubs and social events catered by and for them (Ladd, 2003).

In many countries, the decline of schools for the deaf has led to an increase in the same students enrolled in mainstream schools (Padden & Humphries, 2005). The decline has been bolstered by an increase in usage of hearing assistive technology such as hearing aids and cochlear implants (Padden & Humphries, 2005). Consequently, more and more children are not attending schools for the deaf and thus do not experience language socialisation through sign language with other deaf people. In other cases, deaf schools have not traditionally used a natural sign language as the primary means of instruction for deaf children; as one example, Japanese SL is rarely used in deaf schools in Japan (Hayashi & Tobin, 2015).

In Norway, deaf children have a legal right to a bilingual education in Norwegian and Norwegian SL; however, only one out of four state schools for the deaf is still in operation. The three others have either shut down or merged with municipality schools (Hjulstad, 2017). This has led to the development of a new model of deaf education wherein deaf pupils meet physically for a few weeks at the remaining deaf school and receive schooling in Norwegian SL through distance education by videoconferencing while attending their local mainstream schools for most of the academic year. Hjulstad (2017) conducted a micro-ethnography of the embodied participation of students and teachers in classroom activities through sign language conversation in this video-mediated environment.

There are many cases where deaf people, as adults, start attending formal education offered in a sign language, such as at Gallaudet University (a liberal arts university for deaf and hard-of-hearing people in Washington, DC), or through courses taught by other deaf adults, often offered by NGOs. The courses tend to focus on textual literacy, sign language instruction and/or vocational training. Anthropologists have documented the transitions of deaf adults originating from rural regions who move to urban regions and attend such courses, such as in India, Nepal and Cambodia (Hoffmann-Dilloway, 2011; Green, 2014a; Friedner, 2015; Moriarty Harrelson, 2016). In some cases, such courses are offered in rural regions (Green, 2014a). Friedner (2015) documented how deaf people in urban India circulate in spaces such as language courses, NGOs, workplaces, churches and deaf clubs in order to learn Indian Sign Language and various subjects, such as English, computer skills, vocational skills, business management and Bible stories through Indian Sign Language. The above-mentioned authors documented how orienting towards other deaf adults who are fluent signers of a national sign language can often translate to a profound change for deaf people in terms of language use, language identity and personhood.

Emerging sign languages

Emerging sign languages is a category that overlaps with both urban/national and rural/village SLs. The term emerging sign languages was originally designated to refer to the identification of a new sign language created by a sequence of cohorts of deaf children in an educational institution (Senghas & Coppola, 2001) or in a rural signing community without any prior exposure to an existing sign language (Meir et al., 2010; Zeshan & de Vos, 2012). The term was later extended to refer to the divergence of a new sign language from an existing one. For instance, Edwards (2014) documented how in Seattle (U.S.), a new sign language emerged from sustained interactions of deaf-blind people. In the past, deaf-blind people used Visual American Sign Language (the name used by Edwards to denote the ASL used by sighted people) but when deaf-blind started interacting with each other in ‘the protactile movement’, Tactile ASL, a new language (rather than a new variant of ASL), emerged. Nicaraguan SL and Al-Sayyid Bedouin SL (ABSL) are considered exemplars of emerging sign languages, because researchers could still document some of the earlier stages of the development of these languages. It is not clear how and when a language is no longer deemed emerging or new; this appears to depend on the scholar’s perspective.

In generative linguistics and psychological sciences, scholars see emerging sign languages as an opportunity to observe how a language occurs *de novo* and how it changes over time. Scholars make precise and extensive comparisons of ‘gesture’, ‘homesign’ and ‘sign’, often through extensive elicitation methods in staged contexts. By contrast, in linguistic anthropology, scholars study emerging sign languages from an ethnographic approach to understand how language emerges through spontaneous interactions of deaf, deaf-blind and hearing people over time in their everyday lives, considering emic perspectives on such language practices without prescribing to pre-existing scholarly categories of manual communication. There is a greater emphasis on how signers use their language(s) and think about them than just on the structure of the language itself.

Hou (2016) conducted an ethnographic study of an emerging sign language and its community of users in an indigenous Mesoamerican (Chatino) municipality, San Juan Quiahije, Oaxaca, Mexico. The sign language referred to herein is San Juan Quiahije Chatino SL (SJQCSL), which was designated by Hou (2016) for the scholarly purposes of language documentation. She argued that the language is best characterised as a constellation of family sign language varieties, because the language originated in separate residences of deaf people and their families, or signing families, but may have converged in some families. The signing families perceive their signing to be different in some aspects, which is supported by linguistic analysis of the variation in their signing. At the same time, they live in the same area and have some recurring interactions with one another and perceive their signing as mutually intelligible to the extent that they can understand each other with some effort. These observations suggest that the social conditions for some languages emerge in families of deaf people; this has also been documented for the case studies of ABSL (Kisch, 2012), Algerian Jewish SL (Lanesman & Meir, 2012), Ban Khor SL (BKSL) (Nonaka, 2009) and Mardin SL (Zeshan & Dikyuva, 2013).

Just as LE has shed light on the actual diversity of communication systems in sociolinguistic and sociocultural contexts, it has also shown how there is no universal and static developmental trajectory for the emergence of sign languages and their communities of signers. Rather, new sign languages are dynamic products that emerged amongst various interactions of deaf, deaf-blind and hearing interactants. LE offers the potential to expand and enrich our understanding of the circumstances in which sign languages emerge and how those circumstances shape the developmental trajectory of the languages.

Language contact, multilingualism and semiotic repertoires

Deaf people's language lives are plural in terms of their use of signed, spoken and written languages, and even other semiotic resources (Adam, 2012; Quinto-Pozos & Adam, 2013). Language contact, thus, is the norm in the language ecologies of deaf people. In many parts of the world, sign languages exist in a linguistically diverse society where deaf people encounter different spoken languages at home, school and other places. Many deaf people thus know how to speak and/or write one or more spoken languages, and/or one or more sign languages. One example is the transnational borders of the U.S. where English and Spanish are frequently used, and many deaf people use both ASL and Mexican Sign Language, in addition to these spoken languages (Quinto-Pozos, 2009). In recent decades, language contacts through transnational connections have been made increasingly possible by new technologies such as social media and affordable travel, though international deaf interactions have been documented at least since the 19th century (Friedner & Kusters, 2015). Such communicative tools and increased mobility allow deaf people to learn other sign languages or communicate in International Sign (IS), which have arisen in the contact between deaf signers of different linguistic backgrounds.

Tapio (2013, 2014) and Quinto-Pozos and Adam (2015) discussed how not only deaf signers live along many languages, but also how they negotiate with them in different modalities. Many studies focussed on how signers deploy an array of semiotic resources from multiple languages, which represents language contact within and across communication modalities. Studies show three general types of language contact: sign-speech contact, sign-writing contact and sign-sign contact (see Quinto-Pozos & Adam, 2015, for an overview). These contact types involve *code-switching* or *code-mixing*, which pertains to the practice of switching between and/or mixing at least two languages (Quinto-Pozos & Adam, 2015).

Signed language and spoken language contact

This generally refers to contact between some element of a signed language and another of a spoken language. One classic example is mouthing, or the voiceless articulation that originates from part of or whole words in the ambient spoken language, such as English, while signing in British SL (BSL) (Boyes Braem & Sutton-Spence, 2001; Vermeerbergen et al., 2007). Deaf signers do not mouth a word (either partially or wholly) in correspondence with every sign, but rather mouth certain words that are clearly visible and have pragmatic functions in discourse. Mouthing also can occur as a cross-linguistic strategy in other non-related languages such as when a person mouths an English word while simultaneously producing a Finnish SL (FinSL) sign with the same meaning (Tapio, 2013).

Signed language-writing contact

This pertains to contact between a signed language and the written system of the ambient spoken language. One classic example is fingerspelling, the manual production of a handshape that corresponds to the written system (Quinto-Pozos & Adam, 2015). Fingerspelling was originally invented as an educational tool for deaf children. While fingerspelling is regarded as a product of contact between the written system of the ambient spoken language and the signed language, in some sign languages (such as ASL and BSL), it is generally regarded to be part of sign language grammar. Not all sign languages have fingerspelling. Deaf signers who use a sign language that has fingerspelling vary in their proficiency in the written language itself.

Sign language-sign language contact

This pertains to contact between at least two sign languages through code-switching/code-mixing amongst deaf signers who know at least two sign languages (Quinto-Pozos, 2009; Zeshan & Panda, 2015). An example of such contact is producing a sequence of synonymous signs for one concept such as producing the ASL sign for 'tomato' and then producing the Mexican SL sign for the same concept (Quinto-Pozos, 2009). Not all deaf signers exhibit balanced proficiency in all sign languages they use, as some are only taught in schools and others are used at home (Adam, 2012; Kisch, 2012).

A similar phenomenon of language contact has been observed for ABSL. Kisch (2012) grouped deaf ABSL signers into different social generations based on their schooling experiences and exposure to Israeli SL (ISL), the national, urban language of the deaf in Israel. First- and second-generation signers received minimal formal education and had minimal exposure to other sign languages through sporadic contact with other deaf people. By contrast, many third-generation signers received consistent formal education with systematic exposure to ISL, and have had more sustained contact with deaf Israelis. Third-generation signers learned ISL in school and varied in their signing proficiency; some did not continue using ISL upon graduation and used ABSL as their primary sign language. Others became fully bilingual in ABSL and ISL; some preferred to use ISL for communicating amongst themselves. The fourth-generation signers, representing the current youngest generation of signers, were exposed to ISL in different schools; some also received more training to develop spoken Arabic language skills. Kisch's LE study of the local sociolinguistic ecology of deaf ABSL signers reveals how the dynamics of language contact with signed and spoken languages change rapidly within one generation of signers and across generations of signers.

Another strand of LE investigation examines signing practices that surface in encounters between unacquainted signers in which they have different sign language backgrounds and may not share a common language that they are both fluent in. These signers use IS, the name given to such cross-signing practices (Zeshan, 2015) but also to more institutionalised versions that are used during conferences organised by the World Federation of the Deaf. As with gesture and homesign, the question whether IS constitutes a language or not has been the topic of debate. IS has been called a system (Rosenstock, 2008), a pidgin (Supalla & Webb, 1995; McKee & Napier, 2002) and a lingua franca (Hansen, 2015). Authors have foregrounded that the shared, standardised vocabulary of IS is small and that there is a related high use of iconicity (e.g. depiction of a referent by its imagistic characteristics) in its structure (Rosenstock, 2008). Green (2014b, 2015) documented how the use of IS during international gatherings (e.g. presentations, meetings, restaurant visits) is based on the notion that deaf people should communicate directly even when it involves significant effort. She documented how deaf people engage in informal interpreting and in re-signing other's utterances during international deaf gatherings, thus negotiating between the value of communicating directly with signers across linguistic differences and achieving mutual understanding. In her ethnography in Turkey, İlkbařaran (2015) pointed out that deaf Turkish people who can use IS are typically privileged deaf people who are fluent in Turkish SL, living in large cities and having international deaf contacts.

Signers can utilise specific combinations of multiple semiotic resources in signing practices in multiple different ways. A widespread example of combining resources is the practice of chaining: for example, pointing at a written word or fingerspelling it and then signing it, in order to disambiguate the meaning of the signed utterance or to highlight equivalence (Humphries & MacDougall, 1999; Bagga-Gupta, 2000; Tapio, 2013; Holmström &

Schönström, 2017). Variation in the use of different resources appears to be particular to the individual's background and experiences, the social environment and to the signed, spoken and written language(s) used. Kusters (2017a) studied gesture-based interactions between deaf and hearing customers, sellers, baristas, waiters and ticket officers in Mumbai. The interactants produced mouthings or spoken words from different languages (such as Hindi, Marathi, English, Gujarati), as well as writing in those languages, rapidly switching between gestures and writing, and between mouthings in different languages; they paraphrase when they switch, but they also engage in chaining. A deaf-blind participant in this study made use of visible and tactile gesturing including pointing at and tapping on objects (to indicate them), used emblematic gestures and traced the shape of objects on the hand of his interlocutor. He also wrote with his finger on his interlocutors' hands (and they wrote on his hand), occasionally wrote on paper and used a pre-created booklet with English names of spices, represented in Braille and Roman scripts and Marathi (Kusters, 2017b).

The LE approach to investigating the varied multilingual practices of signers highlights a critical issue when considering multilingualism of deaf signers: the theme of access to and incorporation of semiotic resources that enable such practices (Kusters et al., 2017; Holmström & Schönström, 2017; Robinson, 2017). There is a continuing need to assert sign languages as genuine languages and to lobby for sign language rights (De Meulder, 2015). The continued existence of many sign languages is severely endangered, partly due to coupling state-of-the-art hearing technologies with an exclusive focus on spoken language acquisition, but also because of the attrition of bilingual schools for the deaf as spaces for the emergence and transmission of sign languages.

Language shift and endangerment

The vitality of a sign language depends on a constellation of factors, which has been recently explained through the lens of LE. Ethnographic research on endangered sign languages has largely focussed on the village, rural and shared varieties, since they are vulnerable to language endangerment. They are languages with a disproportionately small number of deaf users, often appearing and disappearing within a few generations (Nonaka, 2009; Zeshan & de Vos, 2012). One well-documented ethnographic account of this phenomenon is BKSL (Nonaka, 2012, 2014). Based on the careful investigation of BKSL, Nonaka argued that a complexity of interlocking causes for language shift and endangerment contributes to language shift and endangerment at the macro and micro levels: demographic, economic and social changes, and heightened contact with the national sign language and its users that lead to the changes in local language attitudes, ideologies and socialisation of deaf signers and their interactants. Nonaka (2014) suggested that contact with Thai Sign Language, the national sign language of Thailand and the Thai Deaf community is the biggest contributor to the language shift and endangerment of BKSL.

Linguistic ethnographers, however, have shown that language shift does not lead to immediate language endangerment. Nonaka (2009) argued that in small signing communities, hearing signers are the "keepers" of the endangered village sign language because they have no incentive to learn the national sign language and deaf signers accommodate them by using their village sign language. Moreover, not all endangered sign languages are of the village, rural, shared varieties. Hofer (2017) discussed how governmental and institutional pressure to school young deaf Tibetans in Chinese SL (CSL) threatens the vitality of Lhasa Tibetan SL (TibSL). TibSL is an emerging urban sign language used by deaf Tibetans in Lhasa, the capital of a state dominated by the People's Republic of China (PRC). Although many deaf TibSL

users exhibit positive attitudes towards their language, many who use CSL, the national sign language of PRC, instead of TibSL are unaware of the value of TibSL as the language of deaf Tibetans and/or have internalised the negative attitudes and ideologies about minority and majority sign languages.

Whereas the vitality of village, rural, shared sign languages can be threatened by sustained language contact with national, urban sign languages, the vitality of the latter can also be threatened. Studies of this topic have been relatively scant with the exception of the female variant of Irish SL (LeMaster, 2006). The underlying causes of endangerment of those languages are varied, complex and locally situated, from an ethnographic perspective, but a few linguists have made some common observations. One obvious factor is the sustained existence of deaf people. When a given population of deaf people dwindles, their language dwindles. Johnston (2004) examined different types of census data and forecasted that the factors of improved medicine, genetic science and increases in mainstreaming and cochlear implantation of deaf children would negatively impact the vitality of Australian SL (Auslan). McKee (2017) took a similar approach to assess the vitality of New Zealand SL (NZSL), examining census data and conducting surveys, and observed the development of many factors parallel to those echoed by Johnston (2004). She noticed clear declines in membership in deaf organisations and clubs, and enrolment in deaf schools that would foster the usage of NZSL. This translates to a decreased intergenerational and peer-to-peer transmission of NZSL, which produced a smaller number of younger deaf NZSL signers. At the same time, the smaller number of younger signers was inversely correlated with increased and earlier cochlear implantation in deaf children and parental focus on exclusive spoken speech.

The observations of Johnston (2004) and McKee (2017) appear to be supported by recent school-based ethnographic research about language learning and socialisation in deaf children. For example, Holmström et al. (2015) investigated how deaf Swedish children with cochlear implants are socialised to participate in exclusive spoken language environments without any usage of Swedish SL (SSL) in mainstream schools. The cochlear implant technology ‘enables’ these children to participate in oral communication, but at the same time, the exclusion of SSL and the minimal usage of lip-reading and other visual aids ‘disable’ them. Moreover, the language socialisation of deaf children as users of a spoken language rather than users as a signed language or even bimodal, bilingual users reveals a hegemonic language ideology about spoken languages. The irony is that many urban, national sign languages are enjoying institutional or legal recognition (De Meulder, 2015), and yet they are also endangered by the shift to exclusive use of spoken languages. Future LE studies can investigate how language shift and endangerment occur through the socialisation of younger generations of deaf children as primary speakers instead of signers and how language ideologies contribute to the socialisation processes.

Critical issues and debates: language ideologies

Language ideologies are part and parcel of how people think about and experience communication and understanding in everyday life. Sign language ideologies encompass a vast array of notions such as treating sign languages as embodied, full-fledged languages in their right or as bounded communication systems. The notions also pertain to the form, function and status of signed languages in relation to other signed languages, spoken languages and written languages, and the use of multimodal and multilingual repertoires. Work on sign language ideologies is currently growing rapidly (including a forthcoming book by Kusters et al., provisionally called “Sign language ideologies in practice”).

LE has contributed to the study of language ideologies because it studies how ideologies emerge in, are expressed in and are related to particular contexts of language practices. In other words, implicitly or explicitly, everyday language practices also involve ideas about those practices. Language ideologies can widely differ across contexts, people and groups and they are often open for negotiation, as they can obscure or contradict language practices *in situ*. LE offers us the potential to capture and analyse such complexities by treating the study of language practices and language ideologies as indistinguishable.

Snoddon (2016) documented the process of creating a sign language course for hearing parents of deaf children in Canada and analysed the teachers' language ideologies of what constituted 'correct ASL' by promoting Canadian varieties of ASL or instructing parents to use signs that are perceived as ASL signs rather than signs that are perceived as English-based. A number of authors have investigated ideologies about the relationship between different sign languages. Moges (2015a, 2015b) documented the process of 'demonstrization' in Eritrea: removing signs from FinSL from Eritrean SL (EriSL), because of a longing to be able to culturally identify with their sign language. Other authors have reported that the foreign sign language such as ASL is regarded as a higher status language, such as in Hausaland in Nigeria (Schmaling, 2003), or a more beautiful language, such as in Vietnam (Cooper, 2015). In the shared signing community of Adamorobe, Kusters (2014) found that deaf people say that Adamorobe Sign Language is 'hard' (which is a source of pride rather than concern), and that AdaSL is more pleasant to use, and more expressive (and therefore more clear) than Ghanaian Sign Language.

In the case study of the San Juan Quiahije signing community, the signing families refer to their language as 'making hands', a literal translation from their spoken language, Chatino (Hou, 2016). This local term does not distinguish 'gesture', 'home sign' and 'sign' nor does it distinguish the production of co-speech gestures by hearing people from deaf people's signing. Similarly, deaf people do not distinguish these categories in their signing. At the same time, hearing people regard their spoken language, Chatino, to be distinct from the national spoken language of Mexico, Spanish and even take pride in speaking it.

Similarly, during the above-mentioned research project on gestures in Mumbai, Kusters and Sahasrabudhe (2018) investigated local perspectives on the difference between gesture and sign. Most of their participants collapsed gesture and sign within the same master category of 'signing' (i.e. gesturing *is* signing) and were not overtly committed to the consideration whether it is '(sign) language' or not. Green's (2014a) exploration of natural sign confirmed this also. By adopting locally authored terms (e.g. 'natural sign') in her scholarly analysis, Green took an analytic perspective that does not focus on this question. In Mumbai, where the use of gestures limits deaf people (such as in the classroom with non-signing teachers, or in court without interpreters), deaf participants feel that the contrast with sign language and its affordances is great. Where gesturing does not limit them, or not as much (such as in customer interactions), but rather enables them to communicate one-on-one with a wide range of non-signing hearing people in everyday life, they might feel it is the same as signing (Kusters & Sahasrabudhe, 2018).

The ideologies about the affordances and limitations of gesture-based communication very much correspond with Green's (2014a, p. 26) characterisation of the affordances of natural sign. As mentioned above, in classifications of different kinds of signing, gesture-based communication (or natural sign, etc.) is not included, or placed 'in-between' or regarded as 'ad hoc' communication, while Hou's, Kusters's and Green's studies have showed that they are not necessarily experienced as such: *it's all signing*. Some academic ideologies on forms of gesturing and signing, organising them on fixed continua or in classifications, have

de-localised fluid language practices; simplified and essentialised their difference; or made distinctions where language users typically do not experience such distinctions.

LE can shed light on the complex interplay of language practices and language ideologies; and on how language practices do or do not seem to be reflected in language ideologies, and the other way around. Furthermore, LE is itself driven by language ideologies, and creates prime spaces of understanding, and engaging in, the encounter between academic and local language ideologies (Kusters & Sahasrabudhe, 2018).

Future directions

The introduction and incorporation of video technology and the ease of international travel have led to the creation of new communicative spaces and practices. For example, nowadays, deaf signers can transcend space and time zones by communicating face-to-face through the Internet. Keating and Mirus (2003) investigated how deaf ASL signers from deaf families adjust their bodies and their language to accommodate each other. The usage of the web camera means that signers can only view three-dimensional signs in a two-dimensional virtual space, which is constrained by the smaller visual field of the camera, compared to the larger visual field of human eyes. Thus, ASL signers develop novel ways of communicative competence: they reorganise and reorient themselves by moving their hands to the centre of the web camera, increasing their repetition of signs, slowing down their signing and changing their pointing signs for clarity. Deaf parents socialise their young deaf children to acquire communicative competence through the use of video technologies. The availability of video technologies has also transformed deaf education (see Hjulstad, 2017, for an overview). Further advances in mobile video technologies such as FaceTime on iPhones, WhatsApp videos, and the production of signed videos that are shared via YouTube and Facebook with reactions often in written language, emojis and/or pictures, have produced more communicative spaces and practices, which await future LE investigation.

Conclusion: contributions and implications

Contemporary research on sign languages through the lens of LE has enriched and enhanced our understanding in the following respects. LE has shown how language learning and the socialisation of deaf children and adults as signers occur (or do not occur) through changing communicative spaces and practices such as mainstream schools and video-mediated technologies. LE has challenged existing classifications of sign languages and foregrounded the complexity of signed practices in various social contexts and in relation to language socialisation, emergence and endangerment processes. It also has given us insight into how language practices and language ideologies are interrelated or contradictory. LE enables us to investigate fluid local language practices and local language ideologies, accounting for their range of affordances and how they are experienced. More importantly, LE has enabled a new generation of researchers to elevate the study of sign languages to an unprecedented research paradigm by investigating them situated in local language practices and ideologies through various epistemological frameworks.

Acknowledgements

Our heartfelt thanks go out to Mara Green, Terra Edwards and Karin Tusting, who commented on earlier versions of this text.

Further readings

- Kusters, A., De Meulder, M., & O'Brien, D. (Eds.) (2017). *Innovations in Deaf Studies: The role of Deaf scholars*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (This is a first one-of-a-kind volume, edited and contributed by a diverse pool of deaf social scientists (including scholars who do linguistic ethnography), who discuss how deaf ontology is central to one's research, positionality and framework.)
- Kusters, A., Green, M., Moriarty-Harrelson, E., & Snoddon, K. (Eds.) (forthcoming). *Sign language ideologies in practice*. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter & Ishara Press. (This book contains chapters that discuss ideologies on sign languages in relation to other sign languages, spoken languages and written languages, and ideologies on the use of multimodal and multilingual repertoires.)

Related topics

Sociolinguistic ethnographies of globalisation; Multimodality; Participant observation; Reflexivity; Language diversity in classroom settings.

References

- Adam, R. (2012). Language contact and borrowing. In R. Pfau, M. Steinbach, & B. Woll (Eds.), *Sign language: An international handbook* (pp. 841–862). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Bagga-Gupta, S. (2000). Visual language environments: Exploring everyday life and literacies in Swedish Deaf bilingual schools. *Visual Anthropology Review*, 15, 95–120.
- Boyes Braem, P., & Sutton-Spence, R. (2001). *The hands are the head of the mouth: The mouth as articulator in sign languages*. Hamburg: Signum.
- Branson, J., Miller, D., & Marsaja, I.G. (1999). Sign languages as natural part of the linguistic mosaic: The impact of Deaf people on discourse forms in North Bali, Indonesia. In E. Winston (Ed.), *Storytelling and conversation: Discourse in Deaf communities*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.
- Cooper, A. (2015). Signed language sovereignties in Việt Nam: Deaf community responses to ASL-based tourism. In M. Friedner & A. Kusters (Eds.), *It's a small world: International Deaf spaces and encounters* (pp. 83–94). Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.
- Cooper, A.C., & Nguyễn, T.T.T. (2015). Signed language community-researcher collaboration in Việt Nam: Challenging language ideologies, creating social change. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 25, 105–127.
- Cooper, A.C., & Tran Thuy Tien, N. (2017). Composing with signed and written languages, our process. *Composition Studies*, 45(1), 13–18.
- Crasborn, O., Sloetjes, H., Auer, E., & Wittenburg, P. (2006). Combining video and numeric data in the analysis of sign languages within the ELAN annotation software. In *Proceeding LREC 2006 Workshop on Representation & Processing of Sign Languages* (pp. 82–87).
- Creese, A. (2008). Linguistic ethnography. In K.A. King & N.H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education* (2nd ed., pp. 229–241). New York: Springer Press.
- De Meulder, M. (2015). The legal recognition of sign languages. *Sign Language Studies*, 15(4), 498–506.
- de Vos, C., & Zeshan, U. (2012). Introduction: Demographic, sociocultural, and linguistic variation across rural signing communities. In U. Zeshan & C. De Vos (Eds.), *Sign languages in village communities: Anthropological and Linguistic Insights* (pp. 2–23). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton & Ishara Press.
- Edwards, T. (2014). *Language emergence in the Seattle DeafBlind community*. Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley.
- Erting, C.J., & Kuntze, M. (2008). Language socialization in Deaf communities. In P.A. Duff & N.H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education* (2nd ed., pp. 287–300). New York: Springer Press.
- Friedner, M. (2015). *Valuing Deaf worlds in urban India*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Friedner, M., & Kusters, A. (Eds.) (2015). *It's a small world: International Deaf spaces and encounters*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.
- Green, E.M. (2014a). The nature of signs: Nepal's Deaf society, local sign, and the production of communicative sociality. (PhD dissertation.) University of California, Berkeley.
- Green, E.M. (2014b). Building the tower of Babel: International Sign, linguistic commensuration, and moral orientation. *Language in Society*, 43, 1–21.

- Green, E.M. (2015). One language, or maybe two: Direct communication, understanding, and informal interpreting in international Deaf encounters. In M. Friedner & A. Kusters (Eds.), *It's a small world: International Deaf spaces and encounters* (pp. 70–82). Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.
- Hansen, M. (2015). What is International Sign? The linguistic status of a visual transborder communication mode. In R. Rosenstock & J. Napier (Eds.), *International Sign: Linguistic, usage and status issues* (pp. 15–32). Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.
- Hayashi, A., & Tobin, J. (2015). Contesting visions at a Japanese school for the Deaf. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 46(4), 1548–1492.
- Hjulstad, J. (2017). Embodied participation in the semiotic ecology of a visually-oriented virtual classroom. PhD dissertation, Norwegian University of Science and Technology.
- Hofer, T. (2017). Is Lhasa Tibetan sign language emerging, endangered, or both? *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 2017(245), 1–33.
- Hoffmann-Dilloway, E. (2011). Lending a hand: Competence through cooperation in Nepal's Deaf Associations. *Language in Society*, 40(3), 285–306.
- Holmström, I., Bagga-Gupta, S., & Jonsson, R. (2015). Communicating and hand(ling) technologies. Everyday life in educational settings where pupils with cochlear implants are mainstreamed. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 25, 256–284.
- Holmström, I., & Schönström, K. (2017). Deaf lecturers' translanguaging in a Higher Education setting. A multimodal multilingual perspective. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 9(1), 88–111.
- Hou, L.Y.-S. (2016). "Making hands": Family sign languages in the San Juan Quiahije community. PhD dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin.
- Humphries, T., & MacDougall, F. (1999). "Chaining" and other links. Making connections between American Sign Language and English in two types of school settings. *Visual Anthropology Review*, 2, 84–94.
- İlkbaşaran, D. (2015). Social media practices of Deaf youth in Turkey: Emerging mobilities and language choices. In M. Friedner & A. Kusters (Eds.), *It's a small world: International Deaf spaces and encounters* (pp. 112–124). Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.
- Johnston, T. (2004). W(h)ither the Deaf community? Population, genetics, and the future of Australian Sign Language. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 148(5), 358–375.
- Keating, E., & Mirus, G. (2003). American Sign Language in virtual space: Interactions between Deaf users of computer-mediated video communication and the impact of technology on language practices. *Language in Society*, 32(5), 693–714.
- Kegl, J., Senghas, A., & Coppola, M. (1999). Creation through contact: Sign language emergence and sign language change in Nicaragua. In M. DeGraff (Ed.), *Language creation and language change: Creolization, diachrony, and development* (pp. 179–238). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Kisch, S. (2008). "Deaf discourse": The social construction of Deafness in a Bedouin community. *Medical Anthropology*, 27, 283–313.
- Kisch, S. (2012). Demarcating generations of signers in the dynamic sociolinguistic landscape of a shared sign language: The case of the Al-Sayyid Bedouin. In U. Zeshan & C. de Vos (Eds.), *Sign languages in village communities: Anthropological and linguistic insights* (pp. 87–126). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton & Ishara Press.
- Kusters, A. (2014). Language ideologies in the shared signing community of Adamorobe. *Language in Society*, 43(2), 139–158.
- Kusters, A. (2017a). Gesture-based customer interactions: Deaf and hearing Mumbaikars' multimodal and metrolingual practices. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 14(3), 283–302.
- Kusters, A. (2017b). "Our hands must be connected": Visible gestures, tactile gestures and objects in interactions featuring a Deafblind customer in Mumbai. *Social Semiotics*, 27(4), 394–410.
- Kusters, A., Green, M., Moriarty-Harrelson, E., & Snoddon, K. (Eds.) (forthcoming). *Sign language ideologies in practice*. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter & Ishara Press.
- Kusters, A., & Sahasrabudhe, S. (2018). Language ideologies on the difference between gesture and sign. *Language & Communication*, 60, 44–63.
- Kusters, A., Sahasrabudhe, S., & Gopalakrishnan, A. (2016). A reflexive report on filmmaking within a linguistic ethnography with Deaf and hearing people in Mumbai. 16–4. MMG Working Paper.
- Kusters, A., Spotti, M., Swanwick, R., & Tapio, E. (2017). Beyond languages, beyond modalities: Transforming the study of semiotic repertoires. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 14(3), 219–232.
- Ladd, P. (2003). *Understanding Deaf culture: In search of Deafhood*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

- Lanesman, S., & Meir, I. (2012). The survival of Algerian Jewish sign language alongside Israeli sign language in Israel. In U. Zeshan & C. de Vos (Eds.), *Sign languages in village communities: Anthropological and linguistic insights* (pp. 153–179). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton & Ishara Press.
- LeMaster, B. (2003). School language and shifts in Irish Deaf identity. In L.F. Monaghan (Ed.), *Many ways to be Deaf: International variation in Deaf communities* (pp. 155–173). Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.
- LeMaster, B. (2006). Language contraction, revitalization, and Irish women. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 16(2), 211–228.
- McCaskill, C., Lucas, C., Bayley, R., & Hill, J. (2011). *The hidden treasure of Black ASL: Its history and structure*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.
- McKee, R. (2017). Assessing the vitality of New Zealand sign language. *Sign language studies*, 17(3), 322–362.
- McKee, R., & Napier, J. (2002). Interpreting into International Sign pidgin: An analysis. *Sign Language & Linguistics*, 5(1), 27–54.
- Meir, I., Sandler, W., Padden, C., & Aronoff, M. (2010). Emerging sign languages. In M. Marschark & P. Spencer (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of Deaf Studies, language, and education* (pp. 267–280). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Moges, R.T. (2015a). Resistance is not futile: Language planning and demissionization of Eritrean sign language. In A.C. Cooper & K.K. Rashid (Eds.), *Citizenship, politics, difference: Perspectives from sub-Saharan signed language communities* (pp. 64–80). Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.
- Moges, R.T. (2015b). Challenging sign language lineages and geographies: The case of Eritrean, Finnish, and Swedish sign languages. In M. Friedner & A. Kusters (Eds.), *It's a small world: International Deaf spaces and encounters* (pp. 83–94). Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.
- Moriarty Harrelson, E. (2016). Regimes of mobilities: Deaf development, NGOs and Deaf tourism in Cambodia. PhD dissertation, American University.
- Nonaka, A.M. (2009). Estimating size, scope, and membership of the speech/sign communities of undocumented indigenous/village sign languages: The Ban Khor case study. *Language & Communication*, 29, 210–229.
- Nonaka, A.M. (2012). Language ecological change in Ban Khor, Thailand: An ethnographic case study of village sign language endangerment. In U. Zeshan & C. de Vos (Eds.), *Sign languages in village communities: Anthropological and linguistic insights* (pp. 277–313). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton & Ishara Press.
- Nonaka, A.M. (2014). (Almost) everyone here spoke Ban Khor sign language – until they started using TSL: Language shift and endangerment of a Thai village sign language. *Language & Communication*, 38, 54–72.
- Nyst, V. (2015). Sign language fieldwork. In E. Orfanidou, B. Woll, & G. Morgan (Eds.), *Research methods in sign language studies: A practical guide* (pp. 107–122). Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Nyst, V., Sylla, K., & Magassouba, M. (2012). Deaf signers in Douentza, a rural area in Mali. In U. Zeshan & C. de Vos (Eds.), *Sign languages in village communities: Anthropological and linguistic insights* (pp. 251–276). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton & Ishara Press.
- Nyst, V.A.S. (2012). Shared sign languages. In R. Pfau, M. Steinbach, & B. Woll (Eds.), *Sign Language: An international handbook* (pp. 552–574). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Ochs, E., & Schieffelin, B.B. (1994). Language acquisition and socialization: Three developmental stories and their implications. In B.G. Blount (Ed.), *Language, culture, and society* (pp. 470–512). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.
- Padden, C., & Humphries, T. (2005). *Inside Deaf culture*. Cambridge, UK: Harvard University Press.
- Polich, L. (2005). *The emergence of the Deaf community in Nicaragua: "With sign language you can learn so much"*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.
- Poole Nash, J.C. (2015). Martha's Vineyard Sign Language. In J. Bakken Japsen, G.A.M. De Clerck, S. Lutalo-Kiingi, & W.B. McGregor (Eds.), *Sign Languages of the world: A comparative handbook* (pp. 607–627). Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter Mouton & Ishara Press.
- Quinto-Pozos, D. (2009). Code-switching between sign languages. In B. Bullock & J. Toribio (Eds.), *The handbook of code-switching* (pp. 221–237). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Quinto-Pozos, D., & Adam, R. (2015). Sign languages in contact. In A. Schembri & C. Lucas (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and Deaf communities* (pp. 29–60). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Robinson, K. (2017). Conscious artistic translanguaging onstage. *Applied Linguistics Review* (online, ahead of print).

- Rosenstock, R. (2008). The role of iconicity in International Sign. *Sign Language Studies*, 8(2), 131–159.
- Schmaling, C. (2003). A for apple: The impact of Western education and ASL on the Deaf community in Kano State, Northern Nigeria. In L. Monaghan, C. Schmaling, K. Nakamura, & G.H. Turner (Eds.), *Many ways to be Deaf: International variation in Deaf communities* (pp. 302–310). Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.
- Senghas, A., & Coppola, M. (2001). Children creating language: How Nicaraguan Sign Language acquired a spatial grammar. *Psychological Science*, 12, 323–328.
- Senghas, R.J. (2003). New ways to be Deaf in Nicaragua: Changes in language, personhood, and community. In L. Monaghan, C. Schmaling, K. Nakamura, & G.H. Turner (Eds.), *Many ways to be Deaf: International variation in Deaf communities* (pp. 260–282). Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.
- Snoddon, K. (2016). Whose ASL counts? Linguistic prescriptivism and challenges in the context of parent sign language curriculum development. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 1–12.
- Supalla, T., & Webb, R. (1995). The grammar of International Sign: A new look at pidgin languages. In K. Emmorey & J.S. Reilly (Eds.), *Language, gesture and space* (pp. 333–352). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Swanwick, R., Wright, S. & Salter, J. (2016). Investigating Deaf children's plural and diverse use of sign and spoken languages in a super diverse context. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 7(2), 117–147.
- Tapio, E. (2013). A nexus analysis of English in the everyday life of FinSL signers: A multimodal view on interaction. PhD dissertation, University of Oulu.
- Tapio, E. (2014). The marginalisation of finely tuned semiotic practices and misunderstandings in relation to (signed) languages and deafness. *Multimodal Communication*, 3, 131–142.
- Vermeerbergen, M., Leeson, L., & Crasborn, O. (2007). *Simultaneity in signed languages: Form and function*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Zeshan, U. (2011). Village sign languages: A commentary. In G. Mathur & D.J. Napoli (Eds.), *Deaf around the world: The impact of language* (pp. 221–230). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zeshan, U. (2015). 'Making meaning': Communication between sign language users without a shared language. *Cognitive Linguistics*, 26, 211–260.
- Zeshan, U., & Dikyuya, H. (2013). Documentation of endangered sign languages: The case of Mardin Sign Language. In M.C. Jones and S. Ogilvie (Eds.), *Keeping languages alive: Documentation, pedagogy and revitalization* (pp. 29–41). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zeshan, U., & de Vos, C. (Eds.) (2012). *Sign languages in village communities: Anthropological and linguistic insights*. Berlin: Ishara Press.
- Zeshan, U., & Panda, S. (2015). Two languages at hand: Code-switching in bilingual Deaf signers. *Sign Language & Linguistics*, 18(2), 90–131.